

B4UFLY General Q&A

Q. Why is the FAA releasing an app?

A. The FAA is responsible for ensuring the safety of the flying public and people and property on the ground. We believe a key way to help people fly unmanned aircraft safely is to provide situational awareness to let them know where it's not a good idea to fly because there might be a conflict in the airspace they're flying in. That's exactly what B4UFLY is designed to do.

This kind of information lends itself well to a smartphone app because our goal is for people to access this information in real-time, wherever they are (or wherever they can receive a cellular signal). We think this offers the best path to voluntary compliance with aviation regulations, which is what the FAA wants to promote.

Q. Is all the information in B4UFLY publically available?

A. B4UFLY pulls directly from publicly available data sources and packages the information in a user-friendly and intuitive format.

Q. What is the basis for B4UFLY's flight status indicator?

A. The B4UFLY flight status indicator (red, orange, or yellow) is driven by laws and regulations, including Public Law 112-95, Section 336 (the Special Rule for Model Aircraft), FAA airspace regulations, and U.S. National Park Service regulations, among others.

Q. Will B4UFLY pick up Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) over wildfires?

A. Yes! B4UFLY's map feature will display any active TFR published on the FAA's TFR website (www.tfr.faa.gov). These will also drive the flight status indicator.

Q. I can't find the B4UFLY app in the app store...how can I get it?

A. The FAA is currently conducting a limited beta test of B4UFLY. We distributed it to 1,000 beta testers on a first-come, first-served basis after Administrator Huerta announced the app in May. As a beta version, B4UFLY is not publicly available in the Apple App Store.

We are maintaining a waiting list in the event not all the first 1,000 users download B4UFLY. If you'd like to be added to the waiting list, please email b4ufly@faa.gov.

Q. Does the FAA plan to release a version of B4UFLY for Android devices?

A. Our goal is to release a future version of B4UFLY to the general public that works on both iOS and Android devices.

Q. How long will the beta test run?

A. The beta test is planned for at least 60 days.

Q. When does the FAA plan to release a full version of B4UFLY to the general public?

A. The timeline for a full release of B4UFLY will depend on beta user feedback, but the FAA's goal is to release a version to the general public by the end of 2015.

Q. Why is the FAA doing a limited beta test of B4UFLY instead of just releasing a full version to the general public?

A. Beta testing is a typical – and essential – part of the software development process. Creating a user-friendly tool for the general public needs to be collaborative, requiring a variety of perspectives and input. We would rather take a little extra time to beta test and ultimately create a tool people will find useful.

Q. Is B4UFLY intended for commercial operators or hobbyists?

A. Right now B4UFLY is really geared toward users of unmanned aircraft who fly for hobby or recreation. The app parameters are set up in accordance with the Special Rule for Model Aircraft (Section 336) in the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. However, we expect civil or commercial operators will also find useful aspects of the app, and we will consider future enhancements for these operators based on the feedback we receive during the beta test.

Q. What does the FAA expect to get from B4UFLY?

A. The FAA is concerned about increasing reports of unsafe operations of unmanned aircraft near airports, over people, and in close proximity to manned aircraft. If using B4UFLY prevents even a single conflict between manned and unmanned aircraft, this will support the FAA's primary mission of aviation safety.

Q. Why is B4UFLY asking beta users for flight information? Why is the FAA developing an electronic notification process?

A. Public Law 112-95, Section 336 requires model aircraft operators to notify the airport operator and air traffic control tower (if one is located at the airport) prior to operating within 5 miles of an airport. Currently, there is no established process to facilitate this exchange of information. The B4UFLY app's initial concept included providing phone numbers for users to call airport operators and air traffic control towers (ATCTs) to fulfill this notification requirement. However, further analysis showed frequent calls to an ATCT could disrupt normal tower functions and possibly create a safety risk. Therefore, the FAA is considering developing an electronic notification process using functions in the B4UFLY app to include in Version 1 of the app. The flight information collected from beta testers will help the FAA develop this process before Version 1 is released to the general public. The FAA also expects it will make notification easier for the public to accomplish.

Q. Is this the same version the FAA will release to the general public, or will there be further enhancements?

A. The B4UFLY development team will make additional enhancements for v1 based on beta user feedback.

Q. Are model airfields included in B4UFLY's programming?

A. At the moment, model airfields of established community-based model aircraft organizations are not included. It's certainly an enhancement we're open to exploring.

Beta Tester Q&A

Q. How do I report bugs?

A. Bugs should be reported to B4UFLY@netdes.com.

Q. When and how do I give the FAA feedback on B4UFLY?

A. Feedback can be sent to B4UFLY@netdes.com as often as users would like to provide it.

Q. I followed the instructions but haven't been able to download B4UFLY. Who do I contact for help?

A. Please contact B4UFLY@netdes.com for help.

Q. Is it mandatory to send flight information via B4UFLY?

A. No, sending flight information via B4UFLY is completely voluntary. The FAA appreciates users' willingness to send information, as we expect it will help us develop a better process for handling electronic notification in the future.

Q. How frequently does the FAA want me to send flight information via B4UFLY?

A. As frequently as you'd like! Once flight information is sent, the function will be disabled until you move more than a half-mile away from the location where you last submitted flight information.

To get the flight information as accurate as possible, we encourage users to send flight information from the location where they intend to fly.

Q. What if the B4UFLY status indicator is red (flight prohibited) and I still fly?

A. B4UFLY is intended to provide model aircraft operators with information to make an informed decision about when and where to fly. We expect everyone to fly safely and responsibly. The FAA is responsible for ensuring the safety of the National Airspace System, and we are able to take enforcement action if someone is flying in a manner that endangers the safety of the system.

Q. If the B4UFLY flight status indicator is yellow, does that mean I am authorized to fly by the FAA?

A. A yellow flight status indicator means that none of flight restrictions or requirements programmed in B4UFLY applies to your current flight location.

However, other restrictions or requirements may also apply. The FAA has included several of these in the “Other Guidance” section of the Status Details, like flight restrictions over sporting events or around critical infrastructure, but this is not necessarily all-encompassing. Additionally, there may be local laws or ordinances about flying unmanned aircraft that also affect your intended flight which are not reflected in the app. It is the responsibility of the operator to know the rules and fly safely at all times.

People flying unmanned aircraft also need to consider whether the operation can be conducted safely. For example, they should consider whether there manned aircraft flying nearby, would the flight be close to other people, and other factors.

Q. Why doesn't B4UFLY have a green status indicator when there aren't any restrictions?

A. It is always an operator's responsibility to fly safely and responsibly. Sometimes, this may mean NOT flying, even when B4UFLY doesn't show any restrictions. Therefore, B4UFLY always tells the user to use caution and check other guidance or restrictions.

Users should be aware that, regardless of B4UFLY's status indicator, the FAA has the authority to take enforcement action against anyone who flies an unmanned aircraft, including model aircraft, carelessly or recklessly, or in a way that endangers the safety of the National Airspace System or people or property on the ground.

Q. If I send flight information to the FAA using B4UFLY, have I completed the required notification referenced in the app (Section 336)?

A. No. During the beta test, this information is not being monitored on a real-time basis, but will be used to do regular trend analysis. It is also not attributable to the individual who sent it. This trend analysis will help the FAA develop the necessary processes and procedures for an electronic notification process in the future.

During the beta test, users should provide notification to airports and air traffic facilities in the same manner they did prior to using B4UFLY.

Q. What is the FAA going to do with the flight data I send via B4UFLY?

A. The FAA will use this data to determine if an electronic notification process is a feasible way for model aircraft flyers to notify airports and air traffic control towers.

Q. If I send flight information to the FAA using B4UFLY, can it be used against me in an enforcement case?

A. Flight information voluntarily submitted via B4UFLY during the beta test will be used for developing the electronic notification process. This information is sent to a third party for analysis. It is not sent directly to the FAA.

The FAA can take enforcement action against anyone flying carelessly or recklessly, or endangering the safety of the National Airspace System or people and property on the ground. More information is available at: [www.faa.gov/uas/model aircraft](http://www.faa.gov/uas/model_aircraft).

Q. How can I further support this effort?

A. Use the app! Put it through its paces and send us your feedback! Help us make B4UFLY a more user-friendly and helpful tool to promote safe unmanned aircraft flying.